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STATINTL

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U.S. Is Facing Great Peril

President Nixon's re-emphasis on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) actually was bred by new warnings from CIA Director Richard M. Helms. Behind the scenes, it appeared to Nixon that it is now or never.

When the Soviets violated the atomic test-ban understanding with the United States, Russia became the only nation to have successfully test-fired a nuclear-armed missile at an incoming missile. Thus, the USSR is demonstrably (not merely on paper) far, far ahead of us in missile defense.

The Soviet interceptor is called GALOSH, and Helms counts this defense system's operative sites at 50 and finds the Soviets working day and night, around the clock, on 20 more. These were detected by our SAMOS "spy-bird" photographic satellites.

This is the crunch. Our country and the Free World alike rely not on the ability of the United States to win a nuclear war but on our ability to deter it.

IN SHORT, not through retaliation of our, overwhelming deterrent force. Yet, the Soviets' GALOSH means Russia has largely canceled out our Minuteman missile — our most creditable deterrent protecting the Free World.

Moreover, Helms grimly updated to Nixon the status of the Soviet super-giant SS-9 intercontinental-ballistic missiles, now the largest and most powerful in the world.

The SALT talks have been on for more than a year and a half. They began Nov. 17, 1969. At that time, the Soviets had an estimated 200 SS-9s. And, in recent months, the increasing number of immense, deep-protected launching silos to hold them has been reported. Helms told the President that the Soviets have utilized the time since the SALT talks began to build an additional 100 SS-9s. He placed the total today at around 400.

These 400, Helms said, could just about destroy our Minuteman defense force if the Soviets chose to strike.

NOR IS that all, behind the scenes, that prompted the President's re-emphasis. Our MIRV is a missile containing multiple warheads that allow one missile rocket to attack several targets at the same time. The Soviets are now similarly equipping its SS-9s and — perhaps most shocking of all — the CIA agents in the USSR find the Soviets' version even more advanced than our MIRV.

Additionally, the CIA agents report that the Soviets have an incipient follow-on generation of SS-9s. Until now, this had been only a rumor. In fact, to expand the training of technicians for this follow-on generation the Soviet Union has opened, on something of a crash basis, two new training schools at Stavropol and Saratov and reopened the closed Boris Oglebsk missile-training center.

Next, Helms dealt with the latest sea-based atomic missile realities, for the increasingly accurate and widely "spreading" MIRV-type warheads that we both possess threaten fixed, land-based intercontinental missiles with obsolescence.

Besides, nuclear missile-carrying submarines cannot be tracked and are not where they were even a few minutes ago.

OUR NAVY'S Poseidon missile is a difficult adaptation of the land-based MIRV. At a cost approaching \$100 million each, and requiring 14 months for each conversion, our Navy is now converting 31 of our 61 Polaris-type nuclear subs to carry Poseidons.

This began with the successful conversion of the James Madison and Daniel Boone and means 16 H-bomb (not A-bomb) Poseidon missiles aboard each sub, each with a range of about 2,500 miles and each with at least 10 warheads that can be separately targeted.

We have 61 nuclear subs. The Soviet Union has 65. But, while our own construction, conversion, etc., program is lagging, Helms told the President that the Soviet Union is now capable of launching one nuclear submarine a month.

The CIA expects them to add 70 by 1974 compared to our adding 25. Helms forecast to Nixon that the Soviets by then will have 125, compared to our 167.

IN PRESIDENT Nixon's opinion, the Soviets may use this immense, aggregate missile build-up for a first strike or, more probably, use this superior nuclear power to take greater international political risks.


And, his current emphasis on the SALT talks, and his words of hope, have a far deeper ring of alarm than we know.

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KUP'S COLUMN

THE WASHINGTON WHEEL: The flap last week over conflicting intelligence reports from the Defense Department and CIA on Russian missiles wound up as a tempest in a teapot. But President Nixon now is giving thought to putting the intelligence agencies of the Defense Department, CIA and National Security Council under one management to avoid similar harum-scarum incidents. . . . Sen. Ed Muskie (D-Me.) has decided on a September date to announce he's officially a presidential candidate.

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